

Participatory Action Research and the Experimental Process

Mayangna Yulbarang Balna

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Under the **Participatory Action Research (PAR)** approach, external research initiatives can be presented to a speaker community, and upon their acceptance of the project, the resulting data product can be repurposed for the community benefit.

What is PAR?

- PAR seeks the **ACTIVE** participation of members of the speaker community
- Community members are **AGENTS**, not 'experimental subjects'
- PAR seeks to rebalance the power dynamic between researcher and community to one of **EQUALITY**

Introducing External Research Projects to the Community: The Process

- External research initiative was **introduced** for **discussion** to the Mayangna community
- Project was designed to elicit language data concerning how the Mayangna language represented objects in space and their orientation
- Mayangna community **accepted** the research initiative and became experiment leaders
- The community **discovered** a new use for the research data that benefitted their community

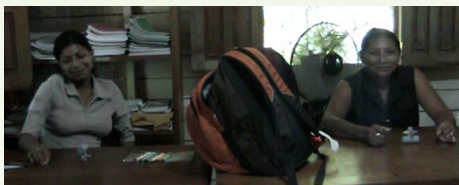
Training of Indigenous Linguist Team

Technology Training

- The Mayangna linguists had already been trained to use ELAN, a software annotation tool for language (See Viñas de Puig, Fri. 11:00 AM, Sarimanok)
- They also participated in training to operate a digital video camera, for the purpose of recording experimental tasks

Training in the Experimental Process

- Mayangna linguists participated in a workshop designed to train them to be experimental leaders
- Trained in data collection procedures for elicitation tasks

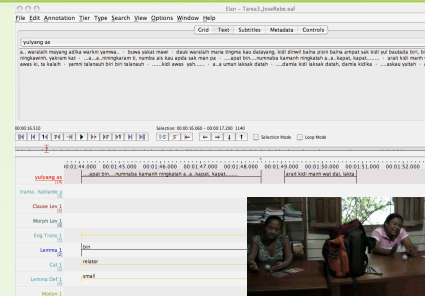


Project Execution

Mayangna Linguists

- Directed elicitation tasks with other speakers within their community
- Collected data resulting from these tasks
- Recorded tasks on video
- Annotated language data on the computer, using ELAN

Data Collection & Processing



Analysis of Data and Project Results

Repurposed results for use in elementary school curriculum:

- Lesson plans for explicit ways of describing an object's spatial position
- Body-part, animal-part, and plant-part terms can be added to textbook materials

